

THE GLEANER

Preaching Christ...

I have, for quite awhile now, felt as though there was something lacking in my preaching. I bounce my sermons off Karen and she sometimes gives me a pointer or two, but most of the time smiles and says, "Good job!" I do occasionally get comments on a sermon from people in the congregation, but many times I worry that the material as presented is over the heads of some of the congregation, or worse that they leave having not gleaned anything that can help them in their walk with Christ. ***Continues top of page, right***



I've always felt that my sermons need to be Bible-centered. I've always sought to share the Good News of Jesus when I can, especially if the passage of the day points to that, even tangentially. My desire is to give hope, not just information. The story of salvation should be anything but dry or dull.

That said, especially over the past 4 months, as we've been busy racing back and forth to see to Dad and take care of stuff in Corvallis, it seems that my time has been cut short for sermon prep, especially with an ambitious series such as that in the Letter to the Hebrews. To that end, I've been using AI to help generate outlines for my sermons and to help with summaries. This has been a huge time saver, and really helps my sometimes scattered thoughts.

Regardless, I've still felt that there was something missing. I've never wanted the sermon to be about me. I've striven to make them informative and applicable, not current events fluff. But still, it seems that something has been missing, despite the praise.

I stumbled onto a video by Pastor Tim Keller where he shares about Kathy (his wife) saying that she really only engaged with his sermons when they were Christ-centered, and that was only about 1 in 4, or 1 in 5. OUCH!

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He recommended a pamphlet by Scottish Pastor Sinclair Ferguson titled, "PREACHING CHRIST FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (Developing a Christ-centered instinct)". This is something I'm only too eager to do.

In our Bible study "The Story", the emphasis is on the over-arching theme of God's plan for salvation throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. I have tried to point out Christological elements in OT texts and incorporate those in my preaching. But Kathy Keller stated that even when her husband Tim's sermons were doctrinally and hermeneutically correct, they often become nothing more than a list of "you should do this" or "you should not do that" lectures apart from the ones centered on Christ where for her, they then came alive, giving her hope.

I enjoy teaching scripture immensely, but I do not want my sermons to be lectures. I want those in our congregation to engage with the text as it's taught, but since the text (all of it!) points to Christ (ultimately), my desire is that the sermons do this as well. It's said of Christmas that "Jesus is the Reason for the Season", and this can be said of Sunday sermons as well: "Jesus is the Reason for the Sermon".

Though out of print, I've found a copy of Ferguson's pamphlet online, and will study it to see how his ethic can help inform my sermons, to take them from lectures to preaching Christ crucified and risen, and his Kingdom come. Pay attention and see if you can sense a bit of a shift, or something different over the next few weeks and months that resonates with you, allowing you to leave the service feeling fed and hopeful. Then HOPEFULLY, Lord willing, we can all continue to grow in our knowledge of Christ and in turn be encouraged to reach out and engage with our families, friends and neighbors in a way that points to Jesus and seeks his Kingdom. **Pastor Tony**



**Waiting
for the
Cheese
Day
Parade
2025 to
start.**

Social Media

Now, at the time of editing this edition and almost September, it is a good time to revisit events from this summer. Fun pictures in the newsletter remind us what has happened in a few short months. First though some stats. You know we love stats, lol.

Facebook: TPC gained another follower. There were 303 interactions which is up 7.1% from the previous 28 days. And I am pleased to say that we had 8 shares! Once again I would ask you to share any of our posts that you like. It is important to share not only about TPC, but God's word too. We can now share the Gospel in many ways, including on line, so please share! We are reaching across the U.S. and the world. Thank you, Kathy, Tana and Tony for all your help with Social Media.

Instagram: 102 Followers with 1,530 posts made by TPC in that same 3 week period. Thank you for your support of TPC's Social Media group. If you would like to make any suggestions for Session, let Sandi M know as she is our Elder for Social Media or let me know. Chris

From Jul 17-Aug 13 TPC Facebook had 4,210 views (combinations of postings). These include musical posts, slides, live views and it is not even a full month. The team is working hard. Thank you!



The women of TPC Bible Study were compelled to try the photo board before Cheese Days. Pretty darn cute, too, except for the Gorgonzola. She looks more like a "ham" to me.

More senior hymn suggestion from Georgia.

Precious Lord, Take My Hand,
and help me up!

It is Well with My Soul,
but My knees hurt.

Just a Slower Walk with Thee.

Nobody Knows the Trouble I
Have Seeing.

Go Tell It on the Mountain,
But Speak Up.

The Greatest Journey



Most of the shoeboxes for 2024 have been delivered and The Greatest Journey discipleship classes are in full swing. A recent statistic from George Huff [OCC coordinator] stated that so far 33 million children have enrolled in The Greatest Journey and of that number 24 million have given their lives to Jesus Christ. According to Google, that a 72.77 % return. That's a huge percentage which shows that people around the world are hungry for the Gospel. Do we wish it was higher—by all means-- but we praise the Lord that the number

is as high as it is and for each precious child that now belongs to Jesus. So please keep this program in your prayers even as we prepare the physical shoeboxes for 2025. We also need to remember that as each child spreads the Gospel to friends and family the number joining God's family multiplies.

Communication can be such a complicated process. We hear so much about new computer programs and AI and so forth but prayer should never be complicated. James 4:2 tells us that we do not have because we do not ask. Have you ever thought of the shoeboxes and The Greatest Journey as a communication tool? That is exactly what they are—communication tools--communicating Jesus' love, saving grace and mercy. As you pray for these programs think about them communicating Jesus' love—and yours—to a lost and dying world. One hundred percent of the prayers you DON'T pray will go unanswered.

We have another wonderful communication tool—The Lord's Prayer which Jesus himself taught us. It starts out "Our Father". People in other countries may use a different name—the Bible gives us many different names for God. The word "OUR" has only one meaning and is all inclusive. It is plural throughout. We are all part of God's family—whether it is the family with whom you live, our church family or those around the world—to the ends of the earth—that have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Each one is a part of "OUR". The next time you pray the Lord's Prayer, my personal prayer is that your vision will expand to the shoebox recipients and those children who are or have attended The Greatest Journey classes and accepted Jesus into their lives. We are all a part of the family of God.

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The Greatest Journey continues.

Speaking of prayer, let's not ever forget to give all the glory and honor to Jesus Christ. Psalm 100:4 says: "Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His Name". Praise helps us to recognize that God is greater than everything and He responds to our requests. What a wonderful, marvelous God we serve! What a privilege to address him as "Our Father". Amen? What an honor and privilege to participate in OCC's shoebox program and The Greatest Journey discipleship program.

The price for each child to attend TGJ is still only \$6.00. What a very small price indeed-especially when we compare it with the price Jesus gladly paid for our salvation. Part of the processing fee for each physical box pays for the materials needed for the program—workbook and New Testament for each child plus the training and training materials for each instructor. Yes, each instructor is trained by OCC. This insures accurate instruction of the program. Much of it can be done online where that access is available. If unavailable, a person who feels called must attend training sessions where they meet other future instructors. Each child who completes the program has a "graduation" certificate and party. Can you imagine how exciting this must be to children who have had so little all their lives. God will greatly reward each dollar invested in furthering His kingdom on earth

Thank you for being so supportive through your prayers for this program and thank you to the Session for supplying the funds for 84 children who wish to attend. God's blessings to you all. Keep on praying. Sandy

September/October Birthdays & Anniversaries**Birthdays**

Joyce A 9/1
Wayne A 9/13
Pauli W 10/1
Gerilynn 10/2
Brenda 10/8
Carol J 10/11
Wanda 10/23
Nancy E 10/31

**September
Anniversaries 2025**

Ernie & Pauli
10/30

None in October



Welcome Angelica and Josh Cook to the Worship Team! I am grateful for them stepping out to read scripture and prayers of the people. They are an answer to prayer. God is so faithful. We are a small but mighty group.

Kathy continues to search for help with live music. I am thankful that Marie has agreed to play for us twice per month. Kathy is also playing. Thank you Kathy for all you do!

Liaison Needed For Senior Centers! These centers support our Seniors with nutritional meals and fellowship opportunities. Jen Bush was faithful in providing information about activities in Winlock. I stay connected through Facebook but do not have the time to devote to these Facilities. Please give prayerful consideration to this important role. Paulli.



We are well into the harvesting season. The garden is producing a bounty of carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, zucchini, squash, onions and much more. Each Friday morning a dedicated group led by Brooke harvests produce for the Saturday Food Distribution. Each week we distribute our bounty to around 60 individuals, mostly shopping for families.

Plans are underway for the 3rd Annual Apple Cider Press. Organizers hope to have 4 presses available for this event, which is open to everyone. There are plans for live music. The event will be on Saturday September 27th. Pressing will start at 10 am and go until we are finished. Potluck will begin at 11am. Donations of apples will be received at the Hall as they become available leading up to the event. Please save the date and plan to attend.

Neighbors has secured a 3 year grant for capital improvements. The first \$70,000 should be in the account in October. Projects include electrical work, new partial roof (with supporting wall) over the kitchen. A functional kitchen will allow for cooking and preserving classes in the future. At the monthly meeting in August 2 bids were approved and work will begin soon.

A new project has been launched. One of the dedicated volunteers has chosen Toledo Neighbors for his Eagle Scout Project. Owen will be building a new sign for the front of the Hall. Owen made his presentation to the board on August 26th, complete with preliminary sketches. It is an honor to work with this young man.

We also heard from our Eagle Scout's adviser Jeff. He asked for the communities support for the upcoming Down Home Shindig, benefitting the Toledo WAFoundation. Money raised is used to support children in need. The event happens once every two years. This year it will be at Country and Lace on September 13,2025. For more information go to:

<https://www.toledowafoundation.com>.

Winlock Foodbank and Rowdy Rooster

The Foodbank continues to serve over 80 families 3 Wednesdays every month. The Foodbank is well stocked with pantry staples, frozen protein, and frozen ready meals. The back deck is open to all Tuesday through Thursday.



Free Watermelon Slices & Cheese Sandwiches



The Pumpkin - A Christian is like a Jack O'Lantern (from Georgia)

God picks you from a patch, brings you in and washes all the dirt off you through Baptism. Then he cuts the top off and scoops out all the yucky stuff. He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, greed, etc. Then he carve you a new smiling face and puts His light inside of you to shine for all the world to see.



Treasurer's Report for Summer 2025

As of the 29th of August, with most of the bills paid and one Sunday collection coming in August and without citing specific dollar amounts, TPC has a solid positive bottom line. You may, of course, look at rows and columns of numbers on the report on the bulletin board in the elevator lobby. Or you can contact Rebecca or myself with questions about TPC finances. More generally, Rebecca has been working to get our QuickBooks online version synced up with the old desktop version we've been using for twenty five years and with the ever changing bank account balances. We'll go live with the online version sometime in the fall. We hope. Just for fun, here's a very brief and sketchy look backwards at TPC finances in this millennium. When I took the treasurer job in 2000, I believe it was the first year that the books were kept on a computer. Prior to that, I believe folks like Lee and LauraLee had kept the books in a ledger. God bless them. Pastor Steve guided me along showing me where to plug in which numbers. Somewhere in the later 2000's Linda Mock took over the bookkeeping responsibilities, having been a professional at some point, leaving me to sign checks and so forth. Barbara Healy assumed the role of Treasurer not long after and was joined by Maggie Spahr. Two professionals spending many hours a week doing an immaculate job of bookkeeping for our little church. You may recall Barbara broke her hand in a fall and was unable to continue. Maggie had left the position to look after Clark who was in failing health. A reluctant Tom took over in 2017. Patiently waiting for someone to take over. In 2023-ish Rebecca came along to help out by recording weekly deposits and paying bills. This year we purchased a laptop computer that could be dedicated to TPC bookkeeping and also bought a QB online subscription. The books have been kept on my own, old laptop which has a nasty habit of freezing up. Ok, enough. Yours in Christ, Tom



Assembling Cheese Sandwiches with the folks from Market Fresh. There may be some in the freezer still. A big thanks to Diane & Gary, and others not pictured for all the hard work!



This summer also saw some sadness. Our beloved Judy is now in the care of Jesus as we await the day when we will all be there and singing "hallelujah" with her. We will miss you Judy until we all get to heaven. As the hymn says, "what a day of rejoicing that will be". Until then and with much love for Judy.



Making cheese sandwiches for parade day. Yep, two coolers already.



God of seed and harvest
 We bless you,
 God of Seed and Harvest
 And we bless each other
 That the beauty of this world
 And the love that created it
 Might be expressed though our lives
 And be a blessing to others
 Now and always.
 Author Unknown